

without amending the Red Cross charter, and for that to occur, congressional action is needed. That is the reason for our legislation.

Last month the other body acted with urgency by passing the American National Red Cross Organization Act. This House aims to act with similar urgency as we consider this bill just 3 weeks after it was introduced by my good friend, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN of Florida, and myself.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 1681 amends the Red Cross charter in a number of significant ways. First, the board of governors will be reduced to 25 members. Where previously some board members were selected by local chapters, some elected by the board, others appointed by the President, our legislation requires governors to be elected solely by delegates to the Red Cross' annual meeting. The responsibilities for day-to-day operations will be delegated exclusively to the Red Cross management rather than to the board. Our legislation requires the Red Cross to establish an office of ombudsman, who will report to Congress, to raise the profile of the whistleblower process for employees and volunteers and to make improvements to it.

Madam Speaker, while these changes would not directly affect the organization's disaster response, it will help promote the kind of leadership needed to make Red Cross management and operations run smoothly and effectively for the balance of this century.

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I would like to express my appreciation to my friend and distinguished colleague, the ranking member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, for cosponsoring this legislation; and I want to thank her for her commitment to ensuring that the American Red Cross remains accountable to the American people.

I strongly support this legislation, and I urge all of my colleagues to do the same.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, as always, it is a delight and a joy to work with our chairman, TOM LANTOS of California. And I join him as an original co-sponsor of The American Red Cross Governance Modernization Act of 2007.

The American Red Cross, as Mr. LANTOS has pointed out, is an institution with a unique status. It has been assigned the responsibility by Congress of fulfilling the obligations of the United States under the Geneva Convention for carrying out peacetime and disaster relief functions. This obligation has not been a small undertaking. The Red Cross has been helping victims of war and natural disasters since its founding in 1881.

As a Member of Congress from Florida's 18th District, I am well aware of

the great job, the amazing efforts of Red Cross as an organization made up of volunteers, and in the way that they have responded to numerous hurricanes in my State and tropical storms. And so on behalf of the residents of my district and my State, thank you to the Red Cross and its many volunteers.

And it is precisely because of this, Madam Speaker, I applaud the Red Cross for the hard work that it has done to review its internal governance structures and proposed changes to its charter that will make it an even stronger organization so they can help more people that will reform the organization and take it into its next century of service.

I am pleased that the Red Cross was willing to accept additional significant proposed changes that will provide even more accountability and transparency in the manner in which it will report its findings regarding audits and investigations to the general public.

In the future, Madam Speaker, anyone will be able to log on to the Red Cross Web site and view the results of its finding for audits and investigations that are conducted by the ombudsman's office. This act alone will provide even further assurances necessary for the American public to feel confident that the Red Cross handles donations with the utmost care.

I urge my colleagues to unanimously support H.R. 1681. And I thank the chairman for his leadership on this issue.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1681, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS HIGHLIGHTED THROUGH NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 293) supporting the goals and ideals highlighted through National Volunteer Week.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

#### H. RES. 293

Whereas National Volunteer Week will be observed during the week of April 15 through 21, 2007;

Whereas the National Volunteer Week theme, "Inspire By Example", truly reflects the power volunteers have to inspire the people they help and to inspire others to serve;

Whereas about 61.2 million people volunteered through or for an organization at least once between September 2005 and September 2006, according to a recent survey by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the proportion of people who volunteered was 26.7 percent, more than a quarter of the total United States population;

Whereas the estimated dollar value of volunteer time was \$18.04 in 2005, according to the latest information provided by Independent Sector, a nonpartisan leadership forum, and the coalition estimates the value of volunteer time for 2005 to be \$280 billion;

Whereas volunteers have contributed to the enhancement and improvement of communities across the United States, especially with respect to the aftermath of the hurricanes on the Gulf Coast; and

Whereas National Volunteer Week will continue to build awareness of the role that volunteers play in local, national, and international communities, and their commitment and dedication to improving lives, strengthening communities, and fostering civic engagement through service and volunteering: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the goals and ideals highlighted through National Volunteer Week;

(2) acknowledges the diligent efforts of our major federally funded community service and volunteer programs;

(3) recognizes with gratitude the contributions of the millions of dedicated and caring individuals who have chosen to serve others through volunteerism; and

(4) encourages all American people, of any age and background, to seek out opportunities to serve through volunteerism.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. SHEA-PORTER) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PLATTS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New Hampshire.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Madam Speaker, I request 5 legislative days during which Members may insert material relevant to House Resolution 293 into the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New Hampshire?

There was no objection.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Ms. SHEA-PORTER asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. House Resolution 293 is a bipartisan bill recognizing the important role of volunteers in local, national, and international communities and their dedication to improving lives, strengthening communities, and fostering civic engagement through service and volunteering.

April 15-21, 2007 is recognized as National Volunteer Week. The theme is Inspire by Example, which reflects the power volunteers have to inspire the people they help and to inspire others to serve.

Inspire by Example has been the theme throughout our history. We have 61 million volunteers out of a population of 300 million who volunteer some time each day to serve others.